

MELBOURNE LEADER July 6, 1993

## LETTERS

■ THE Government's killing of the Fitzroy Community Health Centre illustrates an important lesson for those concerned with the process of change — as well as change itself.

Before identifying this lesson, it is important to note that the Collingwood and Fitzroy community health centres have been coerced into amalgamating, and their combined budgets reduced from about \$1.9 million to \$900,000.

The FCHC is unique in its multidisciplinary practice, which includes doctors, nurses, community development and social workers.

The use of interpreters is unmatched throughout the health system.

The centre's community health team has a deserved reputation for its willingness to take on and succeed with clients other agencies are unable and unwilling to work with, e.g. homeless people with intellectual disabilities, and people with an ongoing psychiatric disability.

The lesson is, therefore, that quality practice is irrelevant.

Whatever the merits of amalgamation and budget cuts, it is ironic and tragic that a quality practice is being sacrificed in the pursuit of quality.

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